

**JJAC**  
**Best Practices Subcommittee**  
**August 27, 2015**  
**2:30pm – 4:30pm**  
**EOPSS, Transportation Building**  
**Chair: Kim Larson**

**Minutes**

**In Attendance:** Chair, Kim Larson; Mark Booher; Yvonne Sparling; Austin Lessin.

**EOPSS:** Erin Heaney, Andrew Polk, Ednei Furtado

**Welcome and Introductions:** Chair Kim Larson welcomed the group and everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

**Mission/Subcommittee description:** This is a new subcommittee that will focus on researching evidence-based practices relating to juvenile justice programs and child welfare issues. It will educate the full JJAC on best practices that should be promoted amongst policy-makers and stakeholders. Its focus for the upcoming year is on the following subjects: juvenile competency to stand trial, trauma-informed practices and risk/needs assessment tools.

**Strategic Plan Overview:** The group discussed how we can execute as a subcommittee by building on the strategic plan and the work flow plan.

Yvonne Sparling spoke about what DYS is doing and highlighted trauma-informed trainings, specifically a training that connects with UMass for new employees; a goal for this year is to ensure all programs are working with trauma-informed care approaches. All staff trainings are incorporating trauma-informed trainings. The focus is on new employees; a strategic goal is to develop trainings for all of the staff. This would incorporate all staff, not just clinical staff; the training is centralized trauma-informed care with the national curriculum. DYS is using a train the trainer model for Directors so training can be incorporated across all shifts. This includes assessing their provider's curriculum. The intention is to look at the data to evaluate room confinements and restraints pre and post training. DYS is hoping that everyone will be trained on the trauma informed training by July 2016, it will also be covered in the annual review trainings.

The group discussed that we should gear towards an information gathering phase, speaking with stakeholders about what is being done at agencies such as DYS, DCF, and DMH.

Yvonne has agreed to speak at the next JJAC meeting regarding trauma-informed services; Erin will reach out to Glenn to see if he can get some information about DCF and DMH.

The group discussed having a section of resources regarding the trauma informed approach on the website. The Best Practices Subcommittee can be a conduit to facilitate the information.

DYS is looking into contacting Dr. Kenneth Hardy, author of *Teens Who Hurt*. He writes about racial trauma, rage in adolescents and gang involved youth. The EOPSS staff noted the JJAC has \$20,000 in an allocation line and we could potentially contribute some funds, with a joint sponsorship of events. This would help with branding and getting the JJAC in a more relevant role.

**Competency Legislation:** There is a state legislative hearing coming up in September. Kim Larson has prepared testimony and once approved she will get a scheduling time to testify. This is an open hearing, and Kim will coordinate a time with the Chair of the JJAC, Bob Gittens. Someone will need to submit the testimony. Mark will look into the process to see if we can submit the testimony ahead of time rather than on the day of the hearing. Additionally, Kim compiled a grant proposal to educate the legislature about kids. The JJAC could vote on the issue if the JJAC wants to be a part of this. Kim is hoping that if we have some kind of educational event to present to the legislature the JJAC could be involved. This could be a good opportunity for the JJAC to get involved and give the group some exposure. Kim believes that the competency bill should pass this term.

When the Best Practices Subcommittee met last year we also discussed Risk Assessment Instruments. There are a variety of risk assessment tools for different points in the system. In Massachusetts, J-PAST will soon be implemented to help determine if a juvenile should be detained. Probation is going to be using a risk assessment tool for individualized treatment of probationers. Some police departments use screening tools to determine if a juvenile should be arrested or what other course of action should be taken. Kim will look into mapping risk assessment tools that currently exist. Erin will look into if any police departments in the Commonwealth are using screening tools.

**Expungement Testimony:** There is a national push for giving people second chances which includes clean records. There are currently five bills in the state legislature in regards to the expungement of juvenile records. A decision will be made at the next JJAC meeting regarding whether the JJAC should submit testimony on the expungement issue. There isn't much existing research on recidivism to help inform expungement policy. Some related questions are: Is there a way to map risk in regards to expungement? Is it possible to talk to a state that currently has an expungement law? How does it impact their state and what could the implications be for Massachusetts? Is confidentiality of records good enough for delinquency cases? How effective is expungement? What happens with juvenile records with regard to federal agencies?

*The meeting was called to an end.*